Advertisement Our Checklist for Your Pet's Full-Body Health

You probably see your pet every day. And he may look perfectly fine to you, but how can you tell if he isn't? The short answer is sometimes you can't. That's why it's so important to schedule regular wellness visits with your veterinarian.



- [ ] **Eyes:** Your pet's eyes should be bright and clear, not red, cloudy or watery. Some pets have eyes that are normally more "teary" than others'. When in doubt, ask your vet if your pet's tearing is normal.
- [ ] **Mouth and Nose:** Aside from your pet's eyes, his mouth and nose are the first things you see when he approaches you. If your pet's bad breath reaches you before he does, it could mean a problem. Dental disease is extremely common among pets — even seemingly healthy ones — and having "doggie breath" can be a sign of this problem.
- [ ] **Ears:** Your pet's ears should be clean and shouldn't have a bad odor. A little bit of wax can be normal, but excessive wax, a brown buildup or redness may mean something's wrong. It's a good idea to check your pet's ears weekly and clean them with a cotton ball (never a cotton swab) and a pet-safe, nonirritating ear-cleaning solution if needed.
- [ ] **Skin and Coat:** Your pet's skin shouldn't be red, flaky or excessively dry or greasy. Any lumps or scabs warrant at least a phone call to your vet. Not all pets have "shiny" coats, but the fur should look healthy for your pet's breed, not dull, and there shouldn't be any bald patches or matted areas.
- [ ] **Bones and** Joints: Does your pet seem to move comfortably? Is he as active as he normally is? Or does he struggle to stand up, or hesitate to jump or use the stairs? Does your pet limp or struggle to complete his regular walks? Bone or joint problems can definitely cause mobility issues, but sometimes the signs are more subtle, like simply not being interested in playing.
- [ ] **Heart and Lungs:** Some dog and cat breeds, especially short-nosed breeds (like Persian cats and Pugs) naturally have "noisier" breathing compared with some other breeds. If you're not sure what's considered normal for your pet, ask your vet. Dogs and cats can develop heart disease, respiratory infections and other conditions that might change the way they breathe.
- [ ] **Digestive System:** For most pets who regularly receive a quality, balanced diet, their appetite, toilet habits and stool quality tend to be relatively consistent. Diarrhea or vomiting can clearly indicate a problem, but other signs of digestive issues

might be less obvious. Watch for changes in appetite, an abdomen that seems swollen or larger than normal, burping more than usual, passing gas, passing stool that's a different color or consistency than normal, or having trouble passing stool.

- [ ] **Urinary** System : Let your vet know about any changes in your pet's urination. Having accidents in the house (if the pet is house-trained), urinating larger amounts or with greater frequency, passing urine that smells or looks different, or having trouble urinating all mean your pet needs to see his vet. And if your pet is trying to urinate but nothing is happening, seek immediate medical attention — this could indicate a life-threatening blockage!

- [ ] **Overall Body** Condition: Don't be lulled into thinking that a chubby pet is healthy. According to the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention, more than half of our pet dogs and cats are overweight or obese. Carrying extra weight can lead to other problems, such as joint and respiratory issues. And don't forget about the other extreme. If your pet seems thinner than normal or is losing weight, that can also indicate a medical problem.

Make and Share Free Checklists
checkli.com